

WORDS & VISION

UFV FACULTY AND STAFF ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Volume 29, Number 1

November 2019



From left to right: Margaret Nickelchok - FSA Staff VP, Melanie Mark - Minister of Advanced Education, Glen Baier - FSA Faculty VP, Christina Neigel - FSA VP Member Engagement, Colleen Bell - FSA Chief Negotiator, Rod Hayward - FSA President

Health and (un) Wellness

Central to an innovative and well-functioning institution is the health of its people. This issue of *Words & Vision* features ideas around this concept as a way of highlighting factors that influence your wellbeing at work and provoke questions around whether our employer is doing enough to support you and your colleagues.

We open with comments from your President, Rod Hayward, about the impact of precarity on the wellbeing of workers and a summary of his visit to Victoria where he met up with Hon. Melanie Mark, the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Training. I should point out that we were incredibly fortunate to have had a private meeting with Hon. Mark this summer where we were able to express our deep interest in addressing issues related to our status as a new (and yet, not-so-new) and under-resourced university.

Melissa Naman, our FPSE Human Rights & International Solidarity representative, follows up with an update on our **Go With the Flow Campaign** which confronts menstrual discrimination in our workplace. We shared our campaign with Minister Mark who

strongly encouraged us to continue to push our institution. This may have paid off and Melissa reports on an exciting development that illustrates the power of our union's ability to rise to collective action.

Your Chief Negotiator, Colleen Bell, reveals the truth about our benefits and how years union work in bargaining has been key to the very benefit programs that enable UFV to claim top ranking as an employer in BC. Mark Ryan, your new Occupational Health & Safety representative makes an introduction and highlights why you need to care about the work of this committee.

We are also launching a new feature in our newsletter called "Union Connection" where we invite members to send in their questions for the FSA team to contemplate and answer. We invite you to send in your questions and responses for subsequent issues.

Your Agreements Chair, Sven van de Wetering, muses over article 18.3(h) of our Collective Agreement and the challenges of avoiding burnout while your Staff Contract Administrator, Vicki Bolan, considers the

impact of organizational reorganizing on employees. Our colleague Carl Peters offers us a powerful statement about the workplace in a poignant poem and our Social Committee Chair, Michelle Vandepol, adds to our coping toolbox with some suggestions on finding time for the things that make us feel whole.

There is lots in this issue but much of it offers tangible nuggets to build on. We encourage you to engage in whatever ways are possible for you. And, on the lighter (but still informative!) side of things, we have released another episode of **The Workplace** that features Starlord and Thor who wrestle with the matter of workplace accommodations (<https://vimeo.com/channels/theworkplace>).

Stay well.
In solidarity,

Christina Neigel

VP Member
Engagement



NOVEMBER 2019



WORDS & VISION NEWSLETTER

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What Does it Mean to be a Unionized Worker in a University?

Rod Hayward | President

How deeply do permanent full-time members of the university consider the plight of our contract staff and faculty? How does year-after-year uncertainty as a casual/precarious worker weigh on one's mental health? In addition to being marginalized by lower pay, contract employees face even more pressure than their full-time equivalents to agree to work that may be uncompensated. For example, what does it mean to refuse to miss a lunch break to "pitch in" as an auxiliary staff member? What can a refusal to participate in a department meeting mean for a sessional faculty trying to make an impression but juggling multiple "gigs" to make ends meet? How does uncertainty wear on such workers?

October 7 to 11 of this year was fair employment week in our sector and, as members of the FSA, we all need to be aware of the challenges faced by our contract colleagues. The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) produced a survey in 2018 titled "Out of the Shadows: Experiences of Contract Academic Staff" (http://makeitfair.ca/aut/new_cas_survey) which speaks to the challenges encountered by Contract faculty. Some of the findings include:

- Between 2005 and 2015, there was a **79%** increase in university teachers working part-time.
- **53%** of respondents want a tenure-track university or full-time, permanent college job.
- **69%** of survey respondents feel their working conditions need to change.
- **45%** of respondents reported that if they did not get their contract instructor pay, they wouldn't be able to pay their monthly bills.
- **Two-thirds** of respondents said their mental health has been negatively impacted by the contingent nature of their employment, and just 19% think the institutions where they work are model employers and supporters of good jobs

We at the FSA and (The Federation of Post-Secondary Educators) FPSE see the increased use of contact workers within our sector as being our number one issue of concern. To this end, I joined the Presidents from all the FPSE locals in a lobby effort in Victoria this fall where we met with Minister Melanie Mark and the entire government Caucus to lobby for a resolution to this issue.



Same work. Same pay.

#makeitfair



During my meetings with presidents from FPSE, many of our discussions focused on the status of our sector's collective agreement negotiations. One item that caught my attention, in particular, was the suggestion, made by a couple of the presidents, around the need to seek a strong negotiation mandate from our members. Stories circulated about the effective use of job action besides that of striking. For example, we discussed the effectiveness of withholding duties outside of core teaching. While I don't believe many of us would miss the plethora of meetings that we attend, I do believe there would be a huge impact on the workplace if we didn't attend such meetings. For instance, how would decisions around hiring, senate governance, or curriculum approval occur if we didn't show up?

Of course, we would need to hold a strike vote before we could take any actions. **But remember, a strong message of support through a strong strike vote does not necessarily mean a full-scale strike.** In fact, any job action would only take place as a last resort after hitting a bargaining wall. Your negotiation team may ask for a strike mandate at some time during the negotiations – don't be alarmed – a strong strike vote is just another tool that may be used during the

negotiations process to highlight member solidarity and support for our bargaining agenda.

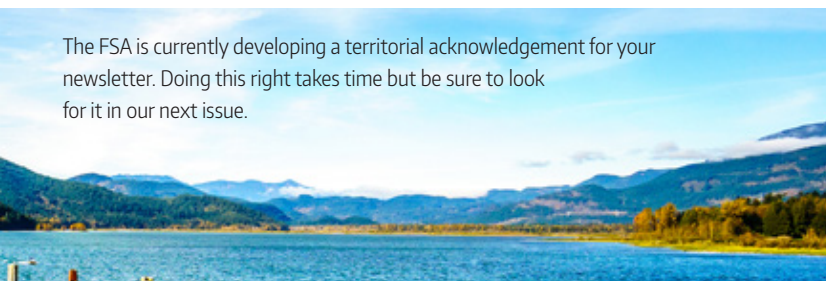
As a University we have accumulated a **surplus of over \$122 million**, perhaps now is the time to seek a more equitable working situation for our many contract employees. But this can only occur if we present ourselves as a strong and united group of members. There IS money in the system and like many other sectors, it is about the choices made in distributing wealth.

Respectfully,
Rod Hayward



**... A Strike Vote doesn't mean a strike?
It is a way of showing solidarity AND it allows us to take even modest forms of job action.**

The FSA is currently developing a territorial acknowledgement for your newsletter. Doing this right takes time but be sure to look for it in our next issue.





Go With The Flow

Melissa Naman | FPSE Human Rights and International Solidarity Representative

As the issue of free menstrual products in public facilities gained traction last year in British Columbia, the FSA broached the possibility of providing such products for free at all UFV campus washrooms with the UFV administration at a Labour & Management meeting last year. Although the request was met with general support, there was no solid implementation or action plan created to see it through. In August 2019, the FSA took matters into their own hands and created a tool to demonstrate the widespread support of this proposal to press for a commitment from UFV administration to make this a reality.

Since the petition has been started, we have collected almost 700 signatures (out of a goal of 1,000), and we have teamed up with the UFV Student Union Society to distribute the petition to students. The petition will be delivered on December 10, 2019 (International Human Rights Day).

At the October 8th Labour & Management meeting, Janelle Blackman (FPSE Status of Women rep) and I went to the meeting to introduce ourselves (as we are newly appointed to our positions), reiterate the urgency of this proposal, and to ask what administration's plans are for its implementation. I'm excited to report that **April 1, 2020 is the target completion date** for getting the dispensers and products in place in all UFV washrooms. In the meantime, we will continue to collect petition signatures in the hopes that our voices will be heard and will keep the target completion date accountable to becoming a reality.

Background:

The purpose of the "Go with the flow" (GWTF) campaign is to persuade UFV administration to provide free menstrual products in all of the UFV washrooms. Why? Because these products are equal in necessity to toilet paper, and should be provided as such. View and sign the open petition here: <https://form.simplesurvey.com/f/I/GoWithTheFlow>



Go with the flow

END MENSTRUAL DISCRIMINATION



ADVANCED LEADERSHIP PROGRAM
In partnership with
UFV FACULTY & STAFF ASSOCIATION

ufvsus.ca/alp

PRESENTS:



ufvsus.ca



ufv-fsa.ca

TRANSGENDER DAY OF REMEMBRANCE:

HISTORY OF AND CONTINUED
VIOLENCE AGAINST
TRANSGENDER PEOPLE

WHAT CAN SOCIETY DO TO
BECOME MORE INCLUSIVE OF
TRANSGENDER RIGHTS?

ADRIENNE SMITH
Trade union activist & advocate
for transgender inclusion



EVERYONE AT UFV IS WELCOME

20 NOV
2019

Evered Hall, Student
Union Building

3:00pm - 4:30 pm

What can society do to become more inclusive of transgender rights? History of and Continued Violence Against Transgender People.

ABOUT THIS EVENT

The UFV-SUS Advanced leadership Program and the UFV Faculty & Staff Association are proud to present:

Adrienne Smith, Trade union activist and advocate for transgender inclusion - Transgender day of Remembrance Conference.

- What is the history and importance of this day ?
- What is the Incredible work that activists like Adrienne have done for trans rights ?
- What are the next steps and what needs to be done ?
- What are some actions that the University Community can take to be more inclusive of trans rights ?

ABOUT ADRIENNE SMITH

Adrienne Smith is a transgender human rights activist and drug policy lawyer. They recently settled a BC Supreme Court case which guaranteed access to opiate replacement therapy for prisoners in BC jails.

Adrienne appeared at the BC Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court of Canada where they argued about the deleterious effects of mandatory minimum sentences for women, indigenous people, and drug users.

As a trade union activist, they advocate for transgender inclusion in our unions and workplaces. Adrienne volunteers at the Catherine White Holman Wellness Clinic where they give free legal advice and notarize name change documents for trans people.

DATE & TIME

Wed, 20 November 2019
3:00 PM - 4:30 PM

LOCATION

Student Union Building
Evered Hall - S1116
Abbotsford Campus

WHAT CAN SOCIETY DO TO
BECOME MORE INCLUSIVE
OF TRANSGENDER RIGHTS?





Colleen Bell | Chief
Negotiator

Benefits of Bargaining, or Bargaining for Benefits?

In March of this year, UFV announced that it had been named one of BC's top employers for the fifth year in a row. Missing from this announcement, however, was the role that our Faculty & Staff Association has played in this accomplishment — because this award is based almost entirely on benefits, and those benefits have been bargained as part of our collective agreement. Benefits such as maternity and parental leave top-ups, extended health and dental plans, pension and long-term disability plans, and lifelong learning opportunities are there not because our employer is unusually generous, but because we traded something — either financial gains or management rights — in return.

Some of the benefits we have (extended health and dental plans, as well as short-term and long-term disability benefits) are a result of UFV's participation in a benefits consortium that includes most of the colleges, institutes, and special-purpose teaching universities in BC. The consortium determines which types of benefits are included and selects the insurer. This is not an equal partnership between employers and unions; the union's voice on this consortium is rather muted, giving employers much of the decision-making power at this level.

The specifics of the benefits tied to the consortium, however, are negotiated between employers and local unions. This means that anything detailed in our collective agreement or benefits booklets can be bargained. All other benefits within the agreement are also bargained exclusively at the local level. Since there has been no increase in benefits over several successive collective agreements, it seems like a good time to raise the issue of benefits with the Employer.

Health and Dental Benefits

About one-third of FSA members do not meet the eligibility requirements for extended health and dental benefits, and even when they do, the Employer only pays 50% of the premium costs¹. The bar for eligibility is high: employees must have at least a 50% appointment in the current year and know that they will have at least the same in the following year. For sessional faculty, this is especially challenging. Article 18.14 only affords sessional faculty the same workload as the previous year, to a maximum of three courses. The most common workload for teaching faculty is 7 courses, leaving sessional faculty just short of the 50% workload required for eligibility. This is a major flaw in the design of these benefit plans, since UFV relies so heavily on sessional faculty to deliver its programs.


Disability Benefits

These benefits provide a form of income replacement when an employee is unable to work as a result of illness or injury. Our long-term disability plan is a true insurance plan, with the premiums paid by employees², but sick leave and short-term disability leaves are funded by the Employer.

For the disability plans (and possibly for sick leave, as well³), Manulife conducts an assessment to determine whether an employee is eligible to receive disability benefits. For a physical illness or injury that is of finite duration, this seems to work as intended. But for illness or injury that could be of longer duration, or that is not physical in nature, having our long-term disability insurer evaluate short-term disability claims seems to be a conflict of interest,

¹For regular employees, the Employer pays 100% of the premiums for medical, extended health (including prescriptions), and dental plans.

²Long-term disability insurance premiums are calculated as a percentage of your gross earnings. Premiums have increased almost annually over the past several years. In the private sector, and frequently in the public sector, it's common for Employers to pay the premiums for long-term disability.

A person is fishing in a misty lake. The person is standing on a rocky shore, holding a fishing rod. The water is calm, and the mist is thick, creating a serene atmosphere. The background shows a hazy shoreline with some trees and buildings.

both in perception and, we believe, in actual practice. When a claim is denied, the Employer demands immediate repayment of any short-term disability benefits received, creating a hardship for employees.

Leave Benefits

These comprise a number of different categories of leave, both paid and unpaid. Some are defined by the number of days available, while others are financial benefits. Some, like political leave, exclude categories of political participation such as Indigenous self-government, an easy change that would also fulfill UFV's commitment to Indigenization and reconciliation.

Others, such as maternity and parental leave top-ups⁴, need to be modernized in order to catch up to changes in employment insurance, which now allows for an 18-month leave.

Still others, like special leave, need to be redesigned to allow for more flexibility. Currently, implementing a new category of special leave (such as elder care) can take 2 or 3 rounds of bargaining, which leaves those affected without recourse for 5 or more years.

Lifelong Learning Benefits

These benefits include the In-service Professional Development Fund, the Training & Development Allowance (TDA), sabbatical and education leaves, and Research Option and Scholarly Activity (ROSA) leaves.

Both the professional development fund and TDA have defined per-employee amounts that have not increased in almost two decades, at the same time that the costs of participating in in-service professional development (e.g., registration fees, hotels, airfare) have increased greatly, leaving employees with less spending power.

Other benefits in this category have no defined per-employee benefit. Coupled with the general lack of transparency around them, this makes it difficult to understand, for example, how many employees can take advantage in a given year, who is selected, and who is involved in selecting the employees. This means that it's very difficult for those who are not successful to grieve or challenge decisions.

Final Thoughts

The Employer has signalled that they plan to introduce an annual compensation statement, which will provide a picture of the total compensation each employee receives, including the benefits for which each of us is eligible. By seeking to extend benefits to those currently ineligible, increase benefit levels to better reflect current costs, and increase transparency around process, we can make positive and lasting changes to our compensation package so that those statements look a whole lot better in the future.

³The FSA is currently seeking information from the Employer on their practices.

⁴Top-ups are a form of income replacement and supplement EI benefits.



Meet Your New JOHSC Representative

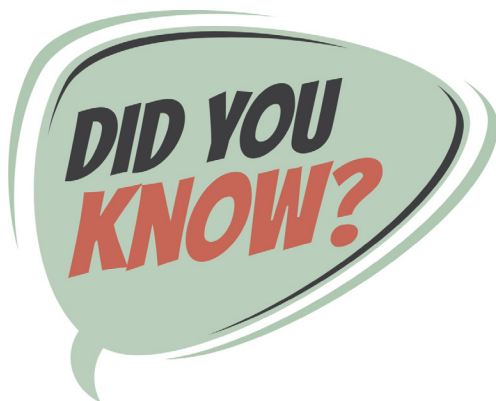
Mark Ryan | Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee Co-Chair

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the new Co-chair for OHSC, and member of the FSA executive. I have been working in this role since taking over from Noham Weinberg last spring. I would like to thank Noham for all his work while serving UFV's faculty and staff in this position; he was always supportive of any concerns I brought to him.

I have been an employee at UFV, working in the Faculty of Trades and Technology, for over 25 years, and have served as the OHS Representative for this faculty for approximately 15 years. As safety is a core component of the program I teach, I have a strong understanding of Work Safe BC, (WCB), regulations, and of how they apply to our work environment. I have used this knowledge to advance safety awareness in our faculty, and to correct numerous WCB violations. I am now looking forward to utilizing my experience in this new position.

The role of the Joint OH&S Committee

It is the role of the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOHSC) to advise the employer on concerns related to safety in our workplace. This is how WCB describes the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, (OHSR); the legally binding rules governing our workplaces: "The purpose of the OHSR is to promote occupational health and safety and to protect workers and other persons present at workplaces from work-related risks to their health, safety, and well-being."



... Workplace accommodations do not have to be "perfect".

Safety in our workplace is comprised of many things. While most people understand the need for protection while working with hazardous equipment and materials, they may not be as aware of other workplace hazards. Ergonomics, air quality, workplace violence, and workplace burnout are all also covered under the OHSR from WCB. As it is now my role to bring forward the safety concerns of UFV employees to the JOHSC, please feel free to contact me with any issues or questions that you may have.

In order to move our workplace towards full compliance with the OHSR, there have been a number of initiatives started and changes completed, within our Safety Program. During my time as Co-Chair this has included the following items:

- The review of our OHS programs for each campus
- The implementation of a new incident reporting system https://www.ufv.ca/hsw/incident_reporting/
- The initiation of regular workplace inspections
- The installation of Risk & Safety bulletin boards
- The beginning of work on New-Employee Safety-Orientations
- The updating of our Terms of Reference for JOHSC
- The updating of the WHMIS Program

These changes reflect an effort, (mostly driven by our new safety officer Paul Elsoff, under the direction of our Director of Risk and Safety, Jacqueline Toering), to steadily improve working conditions at UFV.

In a future *Words and Visions*, I will report on my recent attendance at a meeting of provincial representatives for the FPSE Workplace Health, Safety and the Environment Committee.

FSA/UFV Annual Holidays Party

Cocktails 5:30, Dinner 6:30, Prizes & Dancing 7:30
UFV Evered Hall SUB Building

Cost is \$25 per person (includes dinner, dessert, complimentary wine)

Purchase tickets at:

Abbotsford - Faculty Service, Kathy Gowdridge, B383 | Clearbrook Centre - Reception | Mission - Joan Johannessen, D135
CEP - Student Services, Jennifer Allen, A1318 | TTC - reception | Hope Centre - Michelle Vandepol, H113
Agassiz - tickets can be purchased by mail

Get an extra chance at prizes by dressing in all-black, all-white, black & gold or white & gold.

In the mix DJ, graze table, prizes, and stocking stuffers! Donations for the local food bank gladly accepted.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2019



For more information, email Michelle Vandepol
FSA Social Committee Chair at Michelle.Vandepol@ufv.ca.





Union Connection

"Union Connection" is a new feature of *Words & Vision* that invites members to seek out information and advice that relates to issues that members may be experiencing in their workplace that affect them and, potentially, other members.

In many cases, the questions and concerns members have may be ones that others share. The FSA executive team will address such concerns and queries in this column as a way of sharing advice and insights to a broader audience, while respecting the need for anonymity when necessary.

Because other members in the union may have valuable insights and experiences to share, we also welcome input and comments from all readers on the issues raised. If such comments constructively advances a broader understanding of the matter, will be published in subsequent issues.

Our first letter, submitted by an FSA member is titled:

"A helping hand or slap on the wrist?"

I am a union staff member and have worked at UFV for over a decade.

Over the last couple of years, I have suffered with injuries & sickness. The injuries & sickness on two occasions took me over the four-day threshold and therefore required a doctor's note and Manulife form filled by my doctor each of which cost in excess of \$120 to obtain and provide to HR.

I was asked by my excluded supervisor to explain why the amount of time taken as sick leave was so high. I then entered a conversation with my supervisor on this matter and explained my health circumstances.

A caveat has now been imposed on me as follows:

We want to ensure that UFV does everything we can to support you where needed. Going forward I am asking that you provide a UFV Doctor's Certificate for any future SL, as per article 26.7 of the CA. So, we can ensure that we support you in managing your health and wellbeing to the best of our abilities. Please provide these Doctor's Certificates directly to the HR (representative).

No communication since has been passed onto me regarding whether this caveat is still ongoing. My health has been much improved this year and touch wood I have had no sick days off.

Is the FSA aware of this policy? Are others impacted by this too? Is this expressed in the collective agreement? How long does a doctor's note "apply"?

Signed,

Noteworthy

— — — — —
Dear Noteworthy,

We are happy to hear that your health has improved. We are also glad to hear that your supervisor has indicated support for your health. However, it is troubling to hear that your supervisor applied the conditions of Article 26.7 in this manner.



Your Privacy

To comply with the Personal Information and Privacy Act, employers must be very careful about collecting your information, including personal medical information. Medical information including symptoms, treatment, prognosis is considered private information and employees are under no obligation to disclose such details to an Employer, nor is an Employer allowed to ask for it. The medical certificate form supplied by the employer has an authorization section where you agree to HR and your medical practitioner exchanging **non-diagnostic** information that can help with your rehabilitation and return to work. This authorization is valid for six months.

Confusing Language

Our collective agreement uses the term “medical certificate,” “physician’s certificate”, and “doctor’s note,” making it very tricky, at times, to understand what we are talking about. According to the HR website, the Doctor Certificate is “now the only format of medical note that is accepted” for all sick leave absences **for more than 4** consecutive work days. Thus, Medical Certificate = Doctor’s Certificate.

Article 26.7 Medical Certificates

In addition to “casual absences” **of more than 4** consecutive work days, this article of our agreement establishes that the employer can also require a medical certificate when 1) at least 20 workdays have elapsed since the last certificate was received and 2) when the employee **has been in receipt of STDL benefits** throughout the twenty days.

We brought this situation to the attention of Human Resources who have indicated that an employee would only



The FSA executive team serves ice cream at the August 21, 2019 Annual UFV Employee Welcome Back BBQ Event on the Abbotsford Campus Green.

be asked to bring in medical certificates for a casual absence **of 4 or fewer days** if an **absence management plan** was in place. The absence management plan would only be instituted if a pattern of absences was developing that appears to “be excessive use or abuse” of absences, permissible under 26.5 of the collective agreement. Note that documentation is the key to proving/disproving abuse. For example, if you had been absent for more than four days due to a broken leg and provided a doctor’s certificate, we would not expect the supervisor to ask for a medical certificate if you were then away for three days due to a cold or the stomach flu.

It is the position of the FSA that requests for ongoing medical documentation beyond conditions set out in article 26.7 is unreasonable.

If others feel they have experienced something similar to Noteworthy, the FSA would like to know.

Sincerely,

Your FSA representatives



The Glories and Pitfalls of Paragraph 18.3(h)

Sven van de Wetering | Agreements Chair

Paragraph 18.3(h) of the 2014-2019 Collective Agreement reads in full: *“The work week shall not normally include more than thirty-five (35) hours of assigned duty time during which an employee is required by the employer to be at a specific location.”*

I can find no paragraph other than this one that limits the number of hours (as opposed to number of sections, etc.) that a teaching faculty member can be asked to work. Thus, when I lie in bed at night and moan about how much I am working, this paragraph is my primary potential lifeline. As lifelines go, it is flimsy.

The most faculty-friendly interpretation of this paragraph is that the employer cannot assign more than 35 hours a week of work to a teaching faculty member, period. The belief that this is the correct interpretation sometimes soothes me during my stressed-out evenings, but there is no good reason to believe it other than that it would be nice if we only had to work 35 hours a week. Speaking against this comforting interpretation is all the verbiage after the word “time”, which strongly implies that the paragraph only limits the number of hours of work that management can assign that is tied to a specific location, and that management can assign an unlimited amount of work beyond those 35 hours, as long as that extra work can be carried out in the comfort of the faculty member’s own home while the faculty member wears a bathrobe and eats Nutella® straight out of the jar.

In actual fact, I am not personally all that worried about this very management-friendly interpretation of 18.3(h). During a typical week in a normal semester, I do work substantially more than 35 hours a week, but I’m sure I could reduce that to 35 hours a week and still receive satisfactory performance reviews. My problem, and the problem of hundreds of faculty members like me, is *that I want to do a good job*. So, I take on more service work than the minimum needed to avoid trouble in my three-year reviews. I assign my students lots of written work, even though I have the option, in psychology, of doing a lot with multiple-choice exams. I revamp courses that I think could be better, even

though I could probably coast along on old materials and outlines for quite a while before any student complained. Finally, I do research, despite the fact that the rewards for research are next to nonexistent in my current situation. I am not bragging here; many of my colleagues do the same, or more.

In analyzing my motives for doing all this extra work (remember, I’m a psychologist, analysis of motives is what I do), I realize that several things either motivated me in the past or motivate me now, sometimes both. I assume many of my harder working colleagues are similarly motivated. First there is ambition, the hope that one’s betters will notice one’s hard work and give one a cookie. Of course, the university has a limited number of cookies to give out, but still, there are a few, and if one believes that the administration of UFV is fair, then one will also tend to believe that there are rewards for various forms of hard work that further the interests of UFV.

At the age of 57, I may be becoming post-ambitious, but the decline of this motive has not been accompanied by a decline in my tendency to overwork. As my ambition declines, a second motive, loyalty to my colleagues, rises to fill in the gap. There are people I work with at UFV whom I have known for a quarter century or more. I really like and respect these people, and I don’t want to let them down. Thus, I sit on departmental committees, on Senate and some of its subcommittees, at the executive table at FSA, and so on. At all of these forums, I try to pull my weight, though I confess to occasionally coasting through senate meetings. The tangible rewards for all this work are nil, the time commitment and occasional aggravation are often substantial, and whatever goodwill I may garner from administrators for my service work is probably negated by a few of my snippy comments in Words and Vision (and elsewhere). Nevertheless, I keep at it, because somebody has to do it, and I don’t want to let my colleagues down.

My third motive is to do right by my students. I want to stimulate those who love the academic life and teach those who just want to get their educations and get out

of here. I still have vivid memories of my own life as a student, long ago though it now is. My fondest memories are of those faculty members who expanded my understanding of the world and exposed me to viewpoints that differed from the ones I had previously been exposed to (or had developed myself). I want to be one of those professors who opens up new vistas for my students. To do this, I cannot just coast along on the insights I was struck by 20 years ago; I need to continue to wrestle with ideas, to learn, and to assign assignments that challenge both the student and the marker. I do not always live up to this standard, but I frequently try to, and the result is that my work life consumes much more time and energy than is strictly necessary in order to pass my performance reviews.

These three motives (ambition, loyalty to colleagues, loyalty to students) have several features in common. First, a rewrite of Paragraph 18.3(h), which I strongly endorse for other reasons, will not make any of these motives go away, and consequently will also not solve my overwork issues or mitigate my risk of burnout. Second, these are all motives I am fairly proud of, so appealing to my better nature is not going to make these problems go away, either. Third, all are, to a large extent, dependent on or even constitutive of morale. Morale is hard to grasp, but a large part of it is the perception that UFV as an institution functions well enough that virtue and hard work are likely to be rewarded, that faculty members' relationships with each other are sufficiently collegial that we continue to want to do right by each other, and that UFV provides a sufficiently wholesome environment for our students that it seems reasonable to try to improve one's own teaching practices in order to do right by the students (instead of warning them to vacate the premises and get their higher education somewhere else). In short, if our betters in administration want us to continue to work substantially more than the minimum necessary to

get okay performance reviews and live up to Paragraph 18.3(h), then it behooves them to continue to run the place at least as well as they have been doing up to now, and preferably somewhat better. In this, the interests of administrators and the interests of faculty (and probably staff too, though I know much less of their situation) are somewhat congruent. Morale is a fragile flower, and it does much more to keep UFV functioning and give us a shot at offering the best undergraduate education in Canada (TBUEIC) than Paragraph 18.3(h) does or ever could do.

This is not the end of the story. Morale is sufficiently high for many faculty that they continue to work very hard, leading to both a sense of pride and a risk of burnout. There are other faculty members for whom morale is low, because their ambitions have not been achieved and look unlikely to ever be achieved, because their relations with their colleagues have soured (or were never all that good in the first place), or because they sincerely believe their students would be better off elsewhere. The very normal, natural reaction to low morale like this is depression and burnout, a situation in which the faculty member not only chooses to get by with the minimum amount of work necessary to avoid a catastrophic evaluation but actually feels incapable of doing more than that. Every move feels like it is hampered by unbearable weariness; every action seems as pointless as trying to cool off the sun by throwing a glass of water at it. For all kinds of reasons, this sort of burnout is contagious and hard to deal with once a certain proportion of faculty are afflicted with it. For this reason, boosting morale is seldom a luxury and almost always a necessity. We should probably get on with it, with the help of our good friends on the excluded side of the Great Divide.



... Three considerations when thinking about transgender rights:

1. Deadnaming is the use of a legal name to call out transgender identity.
2. Outing is revealing transgender status.
3. Misgendering is assuming (incorrectly) someone's gender. If you are unsure, ASK people how they would like to be addressed.

A POEM BY CARL PETERS

Department of English

"Take heart, you who were born in the captivity of a fixed predicament; and tremble, you kings of certainty: your iron has become like glass, and the word has been uttered that will shatter it." (Rimbaud)

"The care with which there is incredible justice and likeness, all this makes a magnificent asparagus, and also a fountain." (Gertrude Stein)

Take One for the Team: The New Capitalism and Illness

(For Slavoj Žižek, that annoying little man who knows everything)

Prologue

There is no I in team they say but there would be if you were on it

The team player is a sucker

The team says, "Our job is to create a sense of purpose"

The team player has nothing but their labour power to sell

Team players are the majority that produce the wealth

Teams are the privatization of our commons

The greatest team players are Elon Musk, Bill Gates, Jeff Bezos and Mark Zuckerberg

Their teams are worth billions

The team is global capital

Why are you telling me you are going to Lemberg when you are really going to Lemberg?

Telling the literal truth means lying

Everything changes so that the basic structure of domination will remain the same



Weathering Change

Vicki Bolan | Staff Contract Administrator

Re-organization and Adaptations

While there is a belief by employers that change is good, research done by the American Psychology Association (APA) shows that change can lead to serious health issues for workers. Results of the 2017 *Work and Well-Being Survey* by the APA showed that workers experiencing change were more than twice as likely to report chronic work stress and more than four times as likely to report experiencing physical health symptoms at work.¹

At this point, I could write about the tools available to cope with workplace stress. I could direct you to the HR benefits website where you will find the link to Homewood Health (our EAP provider) or I could recommend a series of mediation or yoga routines. In other words, I would make this about **you** and how **you** need to adapt. Instead, I am going to point out that it is the employer who has the responsibility to ensure that you, the frontline workers, have the necessary knowledge to adequately synthesize the changes occurring in the workplace.

In a 2017 statement David Ballard, head of the APA's Center for Organizational Excellence, noted:

"Change is inevitable in organizations, and when it happens, leadership often underestimates the impact those changes have on employees. If they damage their relationship with employees, ratchet up stress levels, and create a climate of negativity and cynicism in the process, managers can wind up undermining the very change efforts they're trying to promote."²

Ballard goes on to further state, "Disillusioned workers who are frustrated with change efforts may begin to question leaders' motives and resist further changes."³

Supporting Change? Supporting Workers?

These and other changes impact the workplace and our members in significant ways that include making time to adjust, reorient roles, build new knowledge, and forge new relationships. While the 'good news' budget that was presented in last March highlighted investments in academic programming, additional funding across all faculties, and capital spending on infrastructure upgrades, it is up to UFV leadership to resource deliberate organizational changes.

For example, the investments in academic programming noted 'Collaboration Across Boundaries' and spoke to the creation of three new Schools: School of Agriculture, Geography and the Environment (SAGE)⁴, School of Creative Arts (SOCA), and School of Global Engagement and Social Justice (no acronym supplied). These new Schools were created through the splitting up and re-configuring of departments and/or faculties or the merging of departments. SAGE would have seen the movement of Agriculture (from the Faculty of Applied Technology) and Geography and the Environment (from the College of Arts) to the Faculty of Science; the School of Creative Arts is the merger of the Visual Arts and Theatre departments; and the School of Global Engagement and Social Justice will see faculty members from various areas in the College of Arts being seconded.

In addition to the changes in the academic areas, we have seen a re-organization in areas that are associated with faculty and student support. The staff in the former Career Centre (now the Centre for Experiential and Career Education), for instance, are no longer part of Student Services but are under the purview of the Teaching & Learning Centre. Likewise, some staff positions in Educational Technology Services (ETS) have been moved to Information Technology Services (ITS).



If UFV truly believes (as they proclaim) they are a Top 50 employer, they would do well to ensure that managers and supervisors are consultative and informative if they want engaged, well-adjusted, resilient employees capable of weathering the workplace changes that are being instituted.

¹http://www.apaexcellence.org/assets/general/2017-work-and-wellbeing-survey-results.pdf?_ga=2.35618017.1912083358.1555446527-391237656.1555446527

²<https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2017/05/employee-stress>

³Ibid.

⁴In the time since the budget was announced, SAGE as noted will not be moving ahead.



Making Time for the Things You Love

Michelle Vandepol | Social Committee Chair

There are many things in our workplace that function out of our control. This can lead to feelings of burnout and/or frustration. The following suggestions might be useful in your toolbox of coping skills when things seem to pull you away from enjoyment of the everyday.

If you're tempted today to answer, "not long enough" when asked "how was your weekend?", try this instead:

1. Make a list of all the things you wished you had time for on the weekend.
2. Plot out the spots this week you have available: early morning, coffee break, lunch hour, evening, etc.
3. Match the two lists.

The weekend often holds many of the promises for more time, but if you build your projects into the week as well instead of holding out for the weekend, you are far more likely to avoid disappointment. When we integrate both our responsibilities and the things we are looking forward to into our everyday, the gap between the two shrinks and we are more likely to colour our days with our "good day" brush.

Planning an all-work week that holds off on any fun until its end may seem motivating, but in practice is more likely to feel draining. This is even more true when you face

stress at work. Even if maximum productivity during the week is the goal, adding lighthearted components to provide refreshing breaks allows for even more to get done with more focus and efficiency than if we simply slogged through.

Putting time on your side

For example, you may want to take the time to assemble a nice meal for lunch from containers you've brought from home or bring along a book or creative project to get into at break time. Set a timer and pause it if you are interrupted by work. When you work in a high visibility office, interruptions may be inevitable and attending to people in the moment will likely capitalize on momentum and save you time down the road. It is ok to be interrupted, but make sure to pause the timer and come back to your break after you have resolved the issue needing attention in order to get a break and provide your best self to your colleagues and yourself.

If you need a break without interruption or some mid-day physical activity, moving yourself to another space (coffee shop off campus, out for a walk, schedule seeing a friend) allows it to happen.



... TIPS for claims relating to workplace health:

1. Explain why an employer ought to have known the impact of a health/safety issue on you
2. Try to get others to comment on whether work conditions are out of the ordinary
3. Document any employer action which supports the view that the condition is out of the ordinary
4. Push your doctor for a referral for psychiatrist or registered psychologist

You will know the things you wish you had more time for by noticing what comprises your wistful thinking, the purchased supplies for projects and researched activities that don't seem to get booked or noticing resentment at the end of the weekend. Even noticing with envy that someone else seems to always have time for the sorts of things you would like to have time for is a healthy indicator that you would do emotionally well to make time for such a thing yourself.

Don't count yourself and your full schedule out. You can do it. First, track your time in 15-minute intervals throughout a full week and weekend. If you employ this as a non-judgmental process, you will more accurately reflect how you spend your week. Also, make notes of your emotions and energy levels throughout so that you can begin to shift to a more enjoyable use of your time. Once you have a week (including weekend) available to analyze the experience, identify what your highlights were and what you are most surprised you spent significant time on.

Employing the use of timers as you go about revamping your week, enables you to purposefully try stop an activity you would like

to bring into balance. If you have an activity that you would like to integrate into your next week, take a few planning moments to consider where it best fits and schedule it in.

If your desired activity involves making a connection with another person, contact them as well to propose time, place, and activity. If they are not able to make your proposed time, rally with an alternative a week or two away. This lets both parties plan to mutual schedule satisfaction but does not derail your planned week (even if it is primarily with appointments with yourself) because of the conflicting schedule of another.

The benefits of anticipation

Additionally, having something on the calendar to look forward to a week or so away will bring up your life satisfaction level in planning at the last minute. This planning will be ongoing and require tweaking, but

it can quickly soon feel second nature. Anytime you notice your week not aligning with the activities you most enjoy and value, find spaces in your weekly time audit that you could use to bring in purposeful pleasure. Then do it. #happyplanning

Elements of this article previously appeared at <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/making-time-things-you-love-michelle-vandepol/> Reprinted with author permission. Michelle Vandepol is the UFV-FSA social committee chair who would love your input on social opportunities available to UFV-FSA members. Contact her at michelle.vandepol@ufv.ca.

For Further Reading:

The Weekend Effect
by Katrina Onstad is a helpful book.



FSA/UFV Annual Employee Halloween Party

On Thursday October 31st, 2019, folks at UFV had the opportunity to express their “inner” characters at the co-hosted Human Resources and FSA annual Halloween party. Sharing some mid-term laughter, pizza, and prizes, this event offers employees a slightly different environment for making connections and grabbing a bite to eat.



Kim Conway wins the prize at CEP for her scarecrow costume!



FSA executive officers Janelle Blackman, Margaret Nickelchok, and Melissa Naman dress up as union care bears.



Yvette Fairweather, one of many winners in Abbotsford, grabs a prize for her lightbright costume!



CONTRIBUTE to Your FSA Newsletter!

Do you have news or a story that you think other FSA members would be interested in?

Consider contributing to the next *Words & Vision* newsletter! Contact our editor at vpengagement@ufv-fsa.ca to find out how you can submit an article.

WORDS & VISION

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This is Clint

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READ EVERY PAGE OF
THE CANADIAN
CHARTER OF RIGHTS
AND FREEDOMS.

HE'S HERE TO HELP



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"KNOW YOUR RIGHTS"

